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SUBJECT: 2005-2006 INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL STRATEGY
REPORT (INCSR), PART I: DRUGS AND CHEMICAL DIVERSION
CONTROL: FRANCE

REF: 05 State 209561

11. This is part 1 of the INCSR submission for France. A section on the French Caribbean and French Guiana follows at the end of this message.

1I. SUMMARY:

France is a transshipment point for drugs moving into, from and within Europe. Given France's shared borders with trafficking conduits such as Spain, Italy, and Belgium, France is a natural distribution point for drugs moving toward North America from Europe and the Middle East. France's own maritime presence in the Caribbean, its proximity to North Africa, and its participation in the virtually Europe-wide Schengen open border system, contribute to its liability as a transit point for drugs, including drugs originating in South America. France's own large domestic market of predominantly cannabis users is, of course, attractive to traffickers as well. Specifically, in descending order, cannabis originating in Morocco, cocaine originating in South America, heroin originating in southwest Asia, and Ecstasy (MDMA) originating in the Netherlands and Belgium all find their way to France. Increasingly, traffickers are also using the Channel tunnel linking France to Great Britain as a conduit for drugs from mainland Europe to the UK and Ireland. With numbers of drug arrests and seizures increasing again in 2004 (latest figures), Government of France (GOF) counternarcotics initiatives in 2005 included continued increasing cooperation with neighboring countries and Morocco and facilitating confiscation of traffickers' assets. France is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention.

II. STATUS OF COUNTRY

In 2004, the number of drug offenses, seizures, and arrests increased more than 12% over 2003 levels, according to official French figures, as did the volume of seizures of cannabis, heroin, cocaine, crack, and amphetamines. Seizures of Ecstasy dropped compared to 2003 levels, as did seizures of methamphetamines. The number of fatal drug overdoses also decreased, continuing a trend that began in 1995 (with the exception of a small up-tick in 2000). There were only 69 deaths due to drug overdose in 2004, compared to 89 in 2003, a 22% drop.

Cannabis users are the largest group of drug users in France, according to official French statistics. By contrast, users of the next most popular drugs, heroin and cocaine, account for approximately four percent and two percent of users respectively. In 2004, authorities seized 32% more cannabis products than in 2003, and 7% more cocaine. French officials also seized 557 kg of heroin in 2004, compared to 545 kilograms in 2003. Ecstasy seizures declined to 1.893 million pills from more than 2 million in 22003.

In terms of arrests, in 2004 arrested traffickers in cannabis were predominantly French (87%), while traffickers in cocaine tended to be predominantly foreign (84%). Foreign traffickers made up only 25.3% of heroin traffickers, with Moroccans and Algerians together comprising nearly 50% of that total.

III. COUNTRY ACTIONS AGAINST DRUGS IN 2005

France continued to work hard to meet its obligations under the 1988 UN Drug Convention:

POLICY INITIATIVES. France's drug control agency, the Mission Interministerielle de la Lutte Contre la Drogue et la Toxicomanie (MILDT, or the Interministerial Mission for the Fight Against Drugs and Drug Addiction), is the focal point for French national drug control policy. Created in 1982, MILDT coordinates the 19 ministerial departments that have a role in establishing, implementing, and enforcing France's domestic drug control strategy. The French also participate in regional cooperation programs initiated and sponsored by the European Union.

Late in 2004, France launched a five-year action plan called "Programme drogue et toxicomanie" (Drug and Addiction Program) to reduce significantly the prevalence of drug use among the population and lessen the social and health damage caused by the use and trafficking of narcotics. In 2005, as part of that plan, the French Government launched a 38

million euro national information campaign as well as a program to boost France's medical treatment for cannabis and heroin users/addicts. The plan also provided funding (up to 1.2 million euros) for France's contributions to EU and UN counternarcotics programs in four priority areas: Central and Eastern Europe, Africa, Central Asia, and Latin America/Caribbean. While France's bilateral counternarcotics programs focus on the Caribbean basin, special technical bilateral assistance has also been provided to Afghanistan through France's Development Agency (AFD). Ten million euros went to training Afghan counternarcotics police and to fund a crop substitution program that will boost cotton cultivation in the provinces of Koundouz and Balkh.

LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS. French counternarcotics authorities are efficient and effective. In 2005, French authorities made several important seizures of narcotics. In addition, they dismantled fifteen France-based drug rings across France, with a total of 90 arrests. French authorities report that France-based drug rings appear to be less and less tied to one product, and are also increasingly involved in other criminal activity such as money laundering and clandestine gambling. We cite many of the larger seizures below (this list is not exhaustive):

On January 3, French Customs stopped a tractor-trailer arriving in France from Spain. A search revealed over 4.5 tons of hashish within a cargo of sand. On January 11, French authorities at the Belgian border seized 14 kg of heroin from a Spanish vehicle. On January 17, French authorities seized 15 kg heroin and 1 kg cocaine from the luggage of two passengers as they arrived at the train station in Lille from Belgium. On January 18, French Customs stopped a French national as he was going to leave Paris on a flight to Israel in possession of 16.5 kilograms of ecstasy pills in the double bottom of his suitcase. On February 7, French Customs at Bariatou, near Spain stopped a truck arriving from Spain en route to Holland and seized over 1.2 tons of hashish concealed among a cargo of plastic containers. On February 9, French Customs near the Spanish border seized 37 kg heroin from a vehicle with Moldovan registration.

On March 2, the police in Strasbourg seized 7.6 kg of heroin, several hundreds grams of cocaine and weapons from a residence. That same day, French Customs stopped a truck and seized over one ton of hashish destined for Holland. On March 14, French Customs seized 5 kg heroin from the vehicle of a French national. On March 14, French Customs stopped a truck arriving from Spain and seized 2.2 tons of hashish concealed among a cargo of plastic containers. On March 14, French authorities seized over 1.4 tons of hashish following a routine check. On March 16, French Customs seized over 58 kg of cocaine from a vehicle arriving from Madrid, Spain. On March 20, two couriers were arrested at Paris' Charles de Gaulle Airport in possession of 9 kg of ecstasy (approximately 35,920 pills). On March 23, French Customs stopped a truck arriving from Spain and seized 62 kg of cocaine inside a sports bag hidden behind a moving wall inside the trailer. Also on March 23, French Customs seized 19.6 kilograms of ephedrine from a vehicle en route from Madrid to Naples, Italy. On March 31, French Customs near the Spanish border stopped a truck arriving from Spain en route to the Netherlands. A search resulted in the seizure of over 1.6 tons of hashish.

On April 2, French Customs in Epinal seized 2,400 kg of hashish from a truck en route from Barcelona, Spain to Germany. On April 28, French Customs at the port of Dunkerque seized approximately 117 kg of cocaine from two containers on a vessel originating in Surinam. On May 20, French Customs seized 21 kg of heroin concealed inside a hidden compartment of a vehicle. On June 9, French Customs in Marseille seized 3,500 kg of hashish from a sailboat in the port of Marseille. On June 18, French and Spanish authorities concluded an investigation with nine arrests and the seizure of 150 kilograms of cocaine. On June 23 and 24, the judiciary police of Marseille dismantled a cocaine and ecstasy trafficking organization based in the Marseille area. The police arrested the individuals as they were coming back from Amsterdam, Netherlands with 4 kilograms of cocaine and 10,000 ecstasy pills.

On October 3, in the Val de Marne area east of Paris, French police seized 39 kg of cocaine and arrested four people for selling and preparing the substance. Also on October 3, police near Nice in southern France seized over 1.6 tons of cannabis resin in a truck en route to Italy. In one of their largest single heroin seizures ever, on October 18, French Customs officials seized 135 kg of heroin near the Channel Tunnel entrance. Officials arrested a Dutch truck driver who appears to have carried the narcotics in sports bags in the cabin of his truck. On November 1, Interior Ministry officials carried out a large raid involving over 160 officials. The raid, in the Drome department of southeastern France, led to the seizure of 17.6 kg of heroin and yielded 43 arrests. On December 2, French Customs

officials at Lyon airport seized 24 kg of cocaine hidden in packets of dog biscuits and Chinese noodles.

CORRUPTION. Narcotics-related corruption among French public officials is not a problem. The USG is not aware of any involvement by senior officials in the production or distribution of drugs or in the laundering of drugs proceeds.

AGREEMENTS AND TREATIES. France is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention, the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and the 1961 UN Single Convention as amended by its 1972 Protocol. The USG and the French government have bilateral narcotics-related agreements in place, including a 1971 agreement on coordinating action against illegal trafficking. A new extradition treaty between France and the U.S. entered into force in February 2002. A new mutual legal assistance treaty (MLAT) entered into force in 2001. The U.S. also has a Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement (CMAA) with France. France is a party to the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols against migrant smuggling and trafficking in women and children.

CULTIVATION/PRODUCTION. French authorities believe the cultivation and production of illicit drugs is not a problem in France. France cultivates opium poppies under strict legal controls for medical use, and produces amphetamines as pharmaceuticals. It reports its production of both products to the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) and cooperates with the DEA to monitor and control those products. According to authorities, there are no significant Ecstasy laboratories in France, although there may be some small kitchen labs.

DRUG FLOW/TRANSIT. France is a transshipment point for illicit drugs to other European countries. France is a transit point for Moroccan cannabis (hashish) and South American cocaine destined for European markets. Most of the heroin consumed in or transiting France originates in southwest Asia (Afghanistan) and enters France via the Balkans after passing through Iran and Turkey. New routes for transporting heroin from southwest Asia to Europe are developing through Central Asia and Russia and through Belgium and the Netherlands. West African drug traffickers (mostly Nigerian) are also using France as a transshipment point for heroin and cocaine. These traffickers move heroin from both southwest Asia and southeast Asia (primarily Burma) to the United States through West Africa and France, with a back-haul of cocaine from South America to France through the United States and West Africa. Law enforcement officials believe these West African traffickers are stockpiling heroin and cocaine in Africa before shipping it to final destinations. There is no evidence that significant amounts of heroin or cocaine enter the United States from France. Most of the South American cocaine entering France comes through Spain and Portugal. However, officials are seeing an increase in cocaine coming directly to France from the French Caribbean, giving impetus to the creation of the Martinique Task Force—a joint effort with Spain, Colombia, and the UK. Most of the Ecstasy in or transiting France is produced in the Netherlands or Belgium.

DOMESTIC PROGRAMS. MILDT is responsible for coordinating France's demand reduction programs. Drug education efforts target government officials, counselors, teachers, and medical personnel, with the objective of giving these opinion leaders the information they need to assist those endangered by drug abuse in the community. The government is continuing its experimental methadone treatment program. Although the public debate concerning decriminalizing cannabis use continues, the French government is opposed to any change in the 1970 drug law, which criminalizes usage of a defined list of illicit substances, including cannabis. Substitution treatments for addicts have saved 3,500 lives in less than ten years, according to French authorities; there are currently 85,000 persons taking Subutex in France now, and 25,000 on methadone. However, a health-insurance reform law adopted in July 2004 could have some consequences for clinics, according to French press. Under the law, someone seeking medication treatment to combat drug addiction would have to sign a treatment contract with both a physician and his health insurance to have the state cover the drugs to treat their addiction (previously, one needed only to consult a doctor to receive a prescription). Some advocates warn that this requirement could discourage addicts in need of help, noting that adding more administrative measures to the process of getting help could increase the risk of the most susceptible turning to the streets to acquire the drugs. No information is yet available as to whether the reform law has in fact resulted in significant numbers of people turning to the streets for these drugs. The dire predictions by some were likely part of an effort to discourage any changes at all in France's generous social welfare arrangements, including national health care.

IV. U.S. POLICY INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS

BILATERAL COOPERATION. U.S. and GOF counternarcotics law enforcement cooperation remains excellent, with an established practice of information sharing. Since October 2001, the DEA's Paris Country Office (CO) and OCRTIS (French Central Narcotics Office) have been working together on an

operation monitoring the sales of sassafras oil (a precursor needed in the production of Ecstasy) that has resulted in the seizure and/or dismantling of 25 operational, or soon-to-be-operational clandestine MDMA (Ecstasy) laboratories, and the arrests of more than 44 individuals worldwide.

International Controlled Deliveries have resulted in 16 lab seizures in the United States, two in France, three in Germany, and two in Australia, and one each in Ireland, New Zealand and Spain. OCTRIS is independently coordinating all controlled deliveries of sassafras oil to destinations within Europe without the direct involvement of the DEA. The Paris CO is not currently aware of the dispositions of the controlled deliveries coordinated directly by OCTRIS with other European law enforcement agencies during 2004. ROAD AHEAD. The United States will continue its cooperation with France on all counternarcotics fronts, including through multilateral efforts such as the Dublin Group of Countries Coordinating Narcotics Assistance and UNODC.

FRENCH CARIBBEAN/FRENCH GUIANA:

French Guiana, Martinique, Guadeloupe, the French side of St. Martin, and St. Barthelemy are all overseas departments of France and therefore subject to French law, including all international conventions signed by France. With the resources of France behind them, the French Caribbean Departments and French Guiana are meeting the goals and objectives of the 1988 UN Drug Convention. The French Judiciary Police, Gendarmerie, and Customs Service play a major role in narcotics law enforcement in France's overseas departments, just as they do in the rest of France. South American cocaine may move through the French Caribbean and from French Guiana to Europe, and, to a lesser extent, to the United States.

The United States considers the broad geographical area of the eastern and southern Caribbean, of which the French Caribbean is a part, as an area of concern. A small amount of cannabis is cultivated in French Guiana. However, officials are seeing an increase in cocaine coming directly to France from the French Caribbean, and have therefore created the Martinique Task Force in response.

On January 17, 2005, French authorities at Orly arrested two Dutch nationals arriving in Paris from Cayenne, French Guiana, en route to Amsterdam, Netherlands. They were found in possession of 4,424 grams of cocaine concealed in their luggage.

On March 8, 2005 nearly 9 kilos of cocaine were seized by Charles de Gaulle airport customs from pieces of dry-clay pottery specially designed for that purpose. The drug, the value of which has been estimated at 719,680 euros, were found in two parcels, each containing two pieces of pottery, which were sent by postal freight from French Guiana to an individual in the Netherlands.

On September 28, 2005, French authorities at Orly arrested a French national arriving in Paris from Cayenne, French Guiana, en route to Amsterdam, Netherlands. He was found in possession of a total of 1,083 grams of cocaine packaged in pellets he had ingested. He had been recruited by another French national who told him to contact a Surinam national residing in Paramaribo, who arranged for the travel and gave him the cocaine pellets. Once in Paris, he was to transit to Amsterdam where the cocaine would ultimately be delivered. On October 21, 2005 eight people suspected of taking part in the trafficking of cocaine originating in Martinique were arrested and 23 kg of cocaine seized at Saint-Ouen (Paris region). During the arrests, which came after several weeks of surveillance, the drug squad seized 23 kg of cocaine and 264,000 euros, a police source said, adding that the drug was destined for use in Seine-Saint-Denis at a resale value of 30,000 euros a kilo, according to a police source. On November 4, 2005, French authorities at Orly arrested a French national arriving in Paris from Cayenne, French Guiana. He was found in possession of 600 grams of cocaine packaged in 48 pellets he had swallowed.

On November 21, 2005, French authorities at Orly arrested two French nationals arriving in Paris from Saint Maarten, French West Indies. One was found in possession of a total of 4,797 grams of cocaine diluted in three rum bottles placed in her luggage. She stated she had been recruited during a trip to Morocco to transport cocaine from Saint Martin to Paris for an amount of money between 10,000 and 15,000 euros.

Separately, and in another French overseas territory, in 2005, French Polynesia held its first methamphetamine trial, sentencing ten drug dealers to prison terms ranging from 18 months to five years. Investigators discovered that one man bought the drug in the United States and smuggled it into French Polynesia seven times the previous year (2004).

In addition to the agreements and treaties discussed in the report on France, USG and Government of France (GOF) counternarcotics cooperation in the Caribbean is enhanced by a multilateral Caribbean customs mutual assistance agreement

that provides for information sharing to enforce customs laws, including those relating to drug trafficking. The assignment of a French Navy liaison officer to the U.S. Joint Interagency Task Force-South (JIATF-S) at Key West, Florida has also enhanced law enforcement cooperation in the Caribbean. The USG and the GOF explored a possible counternarcotics maritime agreement for the Caribbean for several years and one was drafted in November 2001 on Cooperation in Suppressing Illicit Maritime and Aeronautical Trafficking in Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in the Caribbean Area.

On July 15, 2005 1.5 tons of cocaine was seized from a sailing ship flying the Canadian flag by a French naval sloop. The drugs were seized around 600 nautical miles to the northeast of Porto Rico, on the authority of the prefect of the Martinique region. The seizure and subsequent arrest of three people aboard the ship were conducted "in coordination with the Canadian and American services who suspected that the ship was involved in drug trafficking," according to a statement issued by the prefecture.

Since November 2003, the DEA's Paris Country Office (CO) has been working with OCRTIS (the French counternarcotics department within the Ministry of the Interior) and the British National Criminal Intelligence Service on an investigation of a predominantly Guyanese cocaine-trafficking organization. This organization had been sending couriers with kilo quantities of cocaine from the Caribbean through France to England, where the cocaine was distributed as crack. Approximately 30 people have been arrested in France, and over 40 kilos of cocaine have been seized. In the United States, a related violent crack/cocaine organization operating in Pennsylvania has been dismantled, with approximately 15 people having been arrested.

In early 2004, France established the liaison platform and multinational counter-drug taskforce in Martinique which French Minister of the Interior Sarkozy signed along with his counterparts from Colombia, Spain and the United Kingdom in July 2003. The taskforce is aimed at curbing the back-haul shipments of cocaine from South America via the French Antilles into Europe. The task force brings together French National Police, Gendarmerie, and Customs officers alongside colleagues from the three other participating countries. The French have asked the United States to participate in this program. Directors of DEA's Puerto Rico office and DEA's Paris Country Office met with the OCRTIS director in Martinique in late 2003 to arrange for a DEA liaison officer out of the Puerto Rico office to be assigned to the task force; the officer is expected to assume the post once the budget for the position is approved by the DEA.

The multinational counter-drug taskforce's four main objectives are reinforcing operational capabilities, ensuring real coordination between all parties, enhancing foreign counterparts' understanding of the project, and implementing new law enforcement mandates assumed by the French Navy. The task force presence obviates the need for French police officers to travel from Paris. In addition, the OCRTIS officer in charge of the Martinique Task Force oversees the OCRTIS liaison officers serving in Central and South America and other Caribbean countries.

In Martinique, the French inter-ministerial Drug Control Training Center (CIFAD) offers training in French, Spanish and English to officials in the Caribbean and in Central and South America, covering such subjects as money laundering, precursor chemicals, mutual legal assistance, international legal cooperation, coast guard training, customs valuation and drug control in airports. CIFAD coordinates its training activities with the UNDCP, the Organization of American States/CICAD, and individual donor nations. U.S. Customs officers periodically teach at CIFAD.

France supports European Union initiatives to increase counternarcotics assistance to the Caribbean. The EU and its member states, the United States, and other individual and multinational donors are coordinating their assistance programs closely in the region through regular bilateral and multilateral discussions. The GOF participates actively in the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF) as a cooperating and support nation (COSUN).

HOFMANN